

Appendix table 8-20.

Percentage of adults agreeing that the Federal Government should support basic scientific research, by level of Index of Scientific Promise and the Index of Scientific Reservation: 1999

Level of index	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Sample size
Index of Scientific Promise^a				
All adults	15	3	82	1,882
Low (0–49)	34	5	61	217
Moderate (50–74)	20	5	75	565
High (75–100)	8	2	90	1,100
Less than high school graduate	21	7	72	403
Low (0–49)	56	9	35	68
Moderate (50–74)	24	11	65	132
High (75–100)	7	4	89	203
High school graduate	14	2	84	1,111
Low (0–49)	26	4	70	117
Moderate (50–74)	20	3	77	340
High (75–100)	8	2	90	655
Baccalaureate and higher	10	1	89	368
Low (0–49)	16	0	84	32
Moderate (50–74)	16	2	82	93
High (75–100)	7	1	92	242
Index of Scientific Reservation^b				
All adults	15	3	82	1,882
Low (0–29)	7	1	92	732
Moderate (30–54)	17	2	81	712
High (55+)	25	7	68	438
Less than high school graduate	21	7	72	403
Low (0–29)	0	2	98	47
Moderate (30–54)	21	4	75	184
High (55+)	26	12	62	172
High school graduate	14	2	84	1,111
Low (0–29)	8	2	90	452
Moderate (30–54)	15	1	84	423
High (55+)	24	4	72	236
Baccalaureate and higher	10	1	89	368
Low (0–29)	6	1	93	233
Moderate (30–54)	17	2	81	105
High (55+)	24	0	76	30

NOTES: The Index of Scientific Promise and the Index of Scientific Reservation are factor scores converted to a 0–100 scale. A confirmatory factor analysis verified the existence of a two factor structure. The lowest possible factor score (strong disagreement with all of the items) was set to 0, and the highest possible factor score (strong agreement with all of the items) was set to 100. All factor scores between the highest and the lowest were placed on the 0–100 metric accordingly.

^aThe Index of Scientific Promise includes responses to the following statements: “Now I would like to read you some statements like those you might find in a newspaper or magazine article. For each statement, please tell me if you generally agree or disagree. If you feel especially strongly about a statement, please tell me that you strongly agree or disagree. First, science and technology are making our lives healthier, easier, and more comfortable—do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree? Most scientists want to work on things that will make life better for the average person—do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree? With the application of science and new technology, work will become more interesting—do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree? Because of science and technology, there will be more opportunities for the next generation—do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree?”

^bThe Index of Scientific Reservation includes responses to the following statements: “Now I would like to read you some statements like those you might find in a newspaper or magazine article. For each statement, please tell me if you generally agree or disagree. If you feel especially strongly about a statement, please tell me that you strongly agree or strongly disagree. We depend too much on science and not enough on faith—do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree? It is not important for me to know about science in my daily life—do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree? Science makes our way of life change too fast—do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree? Now for a different type of question. People have frequently noted that scientific research has produced both beneficial and harmful consequences. Would you say that, on balance, the benefits of scientific research have outweighed the harmful results, or have the harmful results of scientific research been greater than its benefits? (*If benefits greater*): Would you say that the balance has been strongly in favor of beneficial results, or only slightly? (*If harms greater*): Would you say that the balance has been strongly in favor of harmful results, or only slightly?”

SOURCES: National Science Foundation, Division of Science Resource Studies (NSF/SRS), *NSF Survey of Public Attitudes Toward and Understanding of Science and Technology, 1999* (and earlier years). For a complete set of data from the survey, see J.D. Miller and L. Kimmel, *Public Attitudes Toward Science and Technology, 1979–1999, Integrated Codebook* (Chicago: International Center for the Advancement of Scientific Literacy, Chicago Academy of Sciences, 1999); and unpublished tabulations.

See figure 8-8 in Volume 1.